

# Volunteer Challenge 2004:

## An Executive Summary

In the ten years since the first statewide assessment of historical records and archives in Tennessee, many changes have altered the landscape of record keeping in our state. For the first time, systematic attention and support at the state level have been focused on building a network of archives comparable to the well established regional library system in Tennessee.

Key elements of progress that have occurred in the realm of Tennessee public and private historical records include the following:

- In 1998, Secretary of State Riley C. Darnell established the Assistant State Archivist position and the Local Archives Program in the Tennessee State Library and Archives. State funding for archives development was increased by \$152,000 annually.
- Since the inception of the Local Archives Development Grants in 1999, the Local Archives Program has awarded \$238,300 to forty-five different counties and one municipality for the support and development of local archival programs.
- Since 2000, sixty-eight individuals representing forty-three counties have attended the Tennessee Archives Institute. Co-sponsored by the Tennessee State Library and Archives and the University of Tennessee's County Technical Assistance Service, the Institute is a two and one-half day training program on archives and records management for local government records personnel.
- Since 1998, Local Archives Program personnel have visited eighty-two of Tennessee's ninety-five counties. During these visits, staff provide consultation, instruction, and support for local individuals working on archives and records management programs.
- At the time of the last *Volunteer Challenge* (1993), there were twenty county archives and three municipal archives in the state. As of February 2004, there are fifty-three county archives and five municipal archives in the state.
- There were approximately twenty-one counties with active public records commissions in the state in 1993. Today, there are forty-six.
- During the past decade, the Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) has overseen successful grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to various Tennessee archives totaling \$257,000.

Much work remains to be done in order to build on this base. Counties and municipalities should all have active public records commissions and records programs. Tennessee's public records law needs to be revised in order to make it more rational, cohesive, and in accordance with modern electronic records practices. A task force from the Tennessee State Library & Archives, the Office of Information Resources, and the Records Management Division should work through the State Public Records Commission and the Tennessee General Assembly to achieve these objectives.